



e-Portfolios

Emerging Lessons

'e-portfolios are as diverse and unique as the individuals that populate them...'

ePistle Final Report

These are some of the lessons emerging from e-portfolio use. More detail and related projects can be found in the relevant sections of this infoKit.

Think about requirements	Both technical and pedagogic and involve all stakeholders
Think about the context	Successful use depends on a careful analysis of the teaching and learning context. A clear understanding is needed of the processes involved and a realistic perspective gained about the ways these processes can be worked through in this particular context
Embed into the curriculum	A clear understanding is needed of the processes involved and a realistic perspective gained about the ways these processes can be worked through in this particular context. Learning activities have to be carefully thought through and the learning process identified, with support provided to learners and staff
Win hearts and minds	Think about the benefits to all groups. It is worth bearing in mind that the voice of a learner can be a more powerful persuader than being informed by a lecturer. Students need to feel they 'get' something for their investment. Mature learners are often more receptive to the potential benefits
Staff engagement is key to learner engagement	Staff engagement is key - role, support and attitude of learner support staff is critical. Staff who use an e-portfolio for their PDP have a higher learner engagement
Timing of implementation	Staff need time to think about how to best use the tools before learners are introduced to it
Personalisation is key	Learners need to feel that they own their e-portfolio before fully engaging
Reflection is hard	Providing some structure helps but it can be difficult to engage learners in planning and reflection; some respond well to using blogs and social software as well/instead
Listen to the learner and staff voices	Bear in mind the learner voice is often a more powerful vehicle than being informed by a lecturer
Training	This is not just technical, not about how to use a tool, but getting learners to work through a teaching or learning activity
Longevity	Learners won't be motivated to use their e-portfolios unless they know they have continued access. Consider alumni access and downloading onto a memory stick or transfer to a professional body system